

VZCZCXRO1037

RR RUEHBZ RUEHDU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN

DE RUEHKI #1424 3621106

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

R 281106Z DEC 07

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7309

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2131

INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE

RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

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UNCLAS KINSHASA 001424

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Visit of UN High Commissioner for Refugees
to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

¶11. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres arrived in Kinshasa December 13 to assess the humanitarian situation in North Kivu, where 800,000 people have been displaced by ongoing armed conflicts. He traveled to North Kivu December 15-17, visiting IDP camps near Goma and Gasasa in Kiwanja, north of Rutshuru town.

¶12. Gutteres told reporters he was "shocked" by the testimonies of the atrocities women and children had experienced. He deplored the current tragedy and promised that UNHCR would enhance its cooperation with other UN agencies to improve living standards in the province. He also promised to knock on all doors to find a durable solution to the present conflict. He deplored the presence of child soldiers in armed groups, notably on the front lines.

¶13. Guterres returned to Kinshasa and met with President Kabila December 17 in Kinshasa before returning to Geneva.

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